In the Claims

Claim 1 (Currently Amended): A composition comprising a polynucleotide which encodes a polypeptide having the characteristic of eliciting an immune response protective against disease or death caused by a rickettsial pathogen, wherein said polypeptide comprises the amino acid sequence ~~of SEQ ID NO: 32~~ selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NOs: 26, 28, 30, 34, and ~~or an immunogenic fragment~~ immunogenic fragments thereof.

Claim 2 (Original): The composition, according to claim 1, wherein said rickettsial pathogen is selected from the group consisting of *Rickettsia* spp., *Ehrlichia* spp., *Anaplasma* spp., and *Cowdria* spp.

Claim 3 (Currently Amended): The composition, according to claim 1, wherein said polynucleotide comprises the nucleic acid sequence ~~of SEQ ID NO: 31~~selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NOs: 25, 27, 29, 33, and fragments thereof which encode immunogenic ~~polypeptides.~~ polypeptide fragments.

Claim 4 (Original): The composition, according to claim 1, wherein said polynucleotide further comprises a nucleic acid vaccine vector.

Claim 5 (Original): The composition, according to claim 1, further comprising a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier.

Claim 6 (Currently Amended): A polynucleotide encoding a polypeptide comprising ~~SEQ ID NO: 32~~ SEQ ID NOs: 26, 28, 30, 34, ~~and~~ or fragments thereof.

Claim 7 (Canceled):

Claim 8 (Original): A method for protecting a susceptible host against disease or death caused by a rickettsial pathogen, said method comprising administering an effective amount of a polynucleotide encoding polypeptide according to claim 1.

Claim 9 (Original): The method, according to claim 8, wherein said rickettsial pathogen is selected from the group consisting of *Rickettsia* spp., *Ehrlichia* spp., *Anaplasma* spp., and *Cowdria* spp.

Claim 10 (Currently Amended): The method, according to claim 10, wherein said polynucleotide comprises ~~SEQ ID NO: 31~~ SEQ ID NOs: 25, 27, 29, 33 or~~, and~~ fragments thereof.

Claim 11 (Original): The method, according to claim 10, wherein said nucleic acid further comprises an appropriate nucleic acid vector.

Claim 12 (Original): The method, according to claim 10, wherein said composition further comprises a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier.

Claim 13 (Currently Amended): The method, according to claim 10, which further comprises administration to said host a polypeptide comprising ~~SEQ ID NO: 32~~ SEQ ID NOs: 26, 28, 30, 34, or immunogenic fragments thereof.

Claim 14 (Currently Amended): The method according to claim 10, wherein said polynucleotide comprises a sequence encoding a polypeptide that begins ~~at base 67 of SEQ ID NO:31~~at: a) base 46 of SEQ ID NO: 25; b) base 76 of SEQ ID NO: 27; c) base 58 of SEQ ID NO: 29; or d) base 79 of SEQ ID NO: 33.